

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

**GRAZING LAND MECHANICAL TREATMENT  
(Ac.)**

CODE 548

**DEFINITION**

Modifying physical soil and/or plant conditions with mechanical tools by treatments such as pitting, contour furrowing and ripping or subsoiling.

**PURPOSE**

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to accomplish one or more of the following:

- Fracture compacted soil layers and improve soil permeability
- Reduce water runoff and increase infiltration
- Break up sod-bound conditions and thatch to increase plant vigor
- Renovate and stimulate plant community for greater productivity and yield

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This standard may be applied on pastureland, rangeland, grazed forest and native pastures where slopes are less than 30 percent.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to all Purposes**

Mechanical treatment such as contour furrowing, pitting, ripping or subsoiling shall be designed and applied in a manner to accomplish the desired objectives and address the natural resource concerns. These treatments shall be limited to soils and slopes where surface disturbances will not result in unacceptable levels of soil erosion and/or sedimentation.

Areas to be treated shall be relatively free of undesirable or noxious plants that are likely to increase because of surface disturbance.

If natural plant community is desired, desirable plant species shall be sufficient quantity and have a distribution pattern that allows the plants to take advantage of the improved moisture and to spread into disturbed areas.

Adequate rest from grazing shall be applied to ensure desired plant responses from this treatment.

All treatments should be planned on the contour when conditions warrant.

Assure soil is not too wet prior to treatment.

All work performed under this standard shall comply with State, federal and local laws and regulations.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Conservation practice standards Pasture and Hayland Planting (512) may be used in conjunction with Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment.

Increased surface roughness may make the treated area undesirable for some uses.

Investigate for compacted layers with a probe or other appropriate tool prior to treatment.

Investigate tile drainage systems, pipelines and other buried structures prior to work.

Consider cultural resources when planning this practice. If the selected mechanical treatment will exceed the depth of prior ground disturbance, this activity could affect buried cultural resources.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for installation of Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment shall be prepared for each site or planning unit according to the criteria. Specifications shall be recorded using state developed specification sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in conservation plans or other acceptable documents.

**OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

Implementation of a good prescribed grazing plan will assist in the long-term operation and maintenance of this practice. If the desired effects of this practice are lost over time, the practice may need to be repeated.